

NORTH DAKOTA HOMELAND SECURITY INITIAL REPORT

Doug Friez, Homeland Security Coordinator

April 22, 2002

On October 4, 2001, Governor John Hoeven named Doug Friez, State Director of the North Dakota Division of Emergency Management (DEM), as the state's Homeland Security Coordinator. Based on this designation, the statewide Emergency Management infrastructure has been adapted to enhance Homeland Security through awareness and coordinated preparedness, prevention and response.

Within this existing Emergency Management infrastructure, the state maintains a 10-annex, multi-hazard Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that incorporates the technical expertise and resources of 50 state agencies. The plan outlines how the state will provide support to four tribal nations and 53 counties during emergencies and disasters. The EOP has provided the parameters for North Dakota's response to the repercussions of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and subsequent events and issues.

Additionally, the EOP is being expanded to include initiatives that directly relate to Homeland Security. While the Division of Emergency Management coordinates these efforts, all state agencies have responsibility for implementation. Functional and task coordinators assigned responsibilities in the plan have reviewed and enhanced existing tasks to incorporate Homeland Security concerns.

In each North Dakota community, residents adopted heightened security measures in the wake of September 11th. A private, public and individual partnership to "Watch the Neighborhood" evolved, emphasizing the necessity to "lock the doors" and report any suspicious activities in neighborhoods; schools; workplaces; high-profile, heavily-attended events; and key facilities. Governmental agencies provided information about safe mail handling protocols, workplace security and maintaining normalcy with enhanced vigilance.

Leaders of the state's extensive energy industry increased security at facilities, as did operators of water systems, laboratories, medical facilities, food processing plants, fertilizer plants and other industries. The state's commercial and private airport operators and aerial applicators adopted security plans and increased surveillance.

As a result of these efforts, North Dakota, on state and local levels, has evaluated and adjusted training and operational initiatives; incorporated aviation security measures; heightened security of key facilities; increased intelligence

gathering and sharing among law enforcement, military and public agencies; enhanced direct communications with federal counterparts; and launched public information campaigns designed to empower individuals and organizations at the local level.

On October 11, National Guard soldiers were placed at the state's commercial airports. The Governor enacted increased security measures at the State Capitol and other state facilities, and urged local law enforcement officials and private sector owners to increase surveillance of key facilities

Governor Hoeven also directed state agencies with aviation resources to assist the U.S. Border Patrol with aerial surveillance of the 270-nautical-mile United States-Canadian border. These agencies include N.D. Game and Fish, the Civil Air Patrol, the National Guard and the Highway Patrol. Additionally, National Guard personnel were ordered to federal status to assist the U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs Service and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) with border security missions.

State, local and private agencies have refocused training programs to address terrorism. In November, the Governor hosted a statewide Homeland Security conference, coordinated by the Division of Emergency Management, the North Dakota League of Cities and the North Dakota Association of Counties. Topics included threat assessment, roles and responsibilities within the local and state EOPs, resources, working with the media and communicating with citizens.

Additional activities continue to emphasize awareness and response to potential terrorist acts. Training activities include train-the-trainer courses for emergency medical service (EMS) providers and hazardous material response teams. Other courses are addressing: chemical and biological terrorism awareness and response; nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) incident command; weapons of mass destruction (WMD) awareness training; WMD incident planning for special facilities; and mass fatalities training. As a result of these opportunities, representatives of local, state and private entities participate in exercises designed to test their plans and procedures for responding to a terrorist incident.

Major issues of concern and areas of planning priority that are currently being addressed in the state, by government and the private sector include: bio-terrorism and animal-borne disease concerns; border security; continuity of government; airport security; safeguarding key public and private facilities; sustainment of resources; formation of mutual aid agreements; warning and alert systems; and receipt and dissemination of Homeland security intelligence.

Planners are also reviewing legislative issues to include: open records; public health concerns related to quarantine; first responder and care provider pre-immunization; and pharmaceutical stockpile.

Efforts are underway to develop capabilities to respond by region to Homeland Security threats. These capabilities would encompass services provided by public safety entities to include fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, medical facilities, public works and other emergency functions.

North Dakotans continue to maintain heightened security activities by “Watching the Neighborhood.” Governmental agencies issue periodic updates that contain relevant preparedness and response information. On both the local and state levels, agencies with responsibilities in Emergency Operations Plans meet periodically to review plan information and security measures.

Our state and local leaders face the challenge of maintaining a vigilant attitude to ensure security for our citizens, while maintaining our traditional level of freedom. It is imperative that each individual, as well as private sector and governmental leaders, prepare for a Homeland Security threat or attack. We will maintain our private-public-individual partnerships to prepare our citizens, train our responders and enhance response capabilities.